

Community Life
St. Boniface/Mary, Mother of the Church

Resolution 1996.01 Financial Support for Alpha House

PREAMBLE:

In 1990 the St. Boniface Archdiocesan Council passed a resolution at their convention entitled *Financial Support for Alpha House*. The resolution addressed the need for the crucial initial funds required to implement this project as well as ongoing support for staffing and operating costs. At the time all councils were urged to make a commitment of a minimum donation of \$3.00 per member per year for a period of three years.

- Whereas, The philosophy behind Alpha House is to help women and children to live without the threat of abuse, and
- Whereas, Alpha House relies strongly on the community for their operating costs, and
- Whereas, Alpha House needs to raise approximately \$60,000 annually to provide the staffing and services needed to help families in their care, therefore, be it
- Resolved, That the Manitoba Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 48th Annual Convention assembled, request that councils in Manitoba make an ongoing financial commitment to Alpha House.

BRIEF Financial Support for Alpha House

In 1989 a Resolution entitled *Transitional Housing* was adopted at the Manitoba Provincial Convention. The purpose of this Resolution was to provide more second-stage housing units for abused women and their children. In 1989 a group of concerned women met and formed a vision -ALPHA HOUSE - which became a reality in January 1994.

Alpha House offers a nine-month transition period for women and children affected by domestic violence. Its Mission Statement is to provide protective, affordable, longer-term housing; and comprehensive, emotional and practical support to women and their children, who have left abusive relationships and wish to move toward independent living in the community.

Alpha House is a non-profit charitable organization supported by corporate donors and community groups/individuals. These contributions assist them meeting their continuing operational needs.

Of the 400 crisis centers in Canada, 48 are second stage centers. Alpha House is the only second stage centre in Manitoba that relies on the community to raise the funds in order to operate. On an ongoing basis, efforts are made to accumulate funds that are needed for the yearly operating expenses. Their desire is to be able to create a stable yearly financial base. Alpha House is not government funded, therefore, operating costs come from the community, through memberships, walks, donations, church collections, grants, teas, corporate and group sponsorships, and fundraising efforts. These operating funds allow them to provide the kind of support that is needed for the residents as they continue their healing journey.

Since Alpha House opened its doors in January 1994, 25 mothers and 45 children have sought and received refuge. It has been operating successfully and has had very good evaluations and referrals. Alpha House

remains at full capacity and each day the families receive the support necessary to reaffirm their own strength and self-worth.

The women and children who are leaving abusive relationships find quality care at Alpha House. Alpha House provides programs that meet the children's specific needs, including group sessions on anger management, feelings, separation, problem-solving and self-esteem.

Alpha House provides a women's support group which is held once a week. Visiting guests and speakers have shared information on legal issues, budgeting, nutrition, CPR, active spirituality and protection planning. Throughout the year, topics relevant to the women's situation are discussed such as fear, assertiveness, self-esteem, problem-solving, parenting, education and employment. Women are provided with opportunities to return to school to enrol in re-entry programs and certificate courses.

Alpha House needs to raise approximately \$60,000 annually to provide the staffing and services needed to help the families in their care.

We as members of the Catholic Women's League can provide hope and support for women and children who are victims of abuse. We can become part of the solution by making a commitment to support Alpha House financially according to your ability, by volunteering in different capacities, or by donating supplies needed.

WORKS CITED: Financial Support for Alpha House

1. Figures obtained from CWL National Office
2. Source: Fall 1995 Alpha House Newsletter